

GOOD FRIDAY GRACE

by Teryl Cartwright



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

Robe Maker

Perfectionist, powerful older character

Crown Maker

Younger, impulsive character

Whip Maker

Thin, matter-of-fact character

Nail Maker

Small, strong character

Cross Maker

Big but defensive, weak character

Stone Maker

Older charismatic character,
much like Robe Maker

PRODUCTION NOTES

This program requires six speakers. All parts may be played by either males or females.

Costumes

The characters may wear black clothing if sitting in the congregation and coming forward to speak. They may wear black robes if sitting in the choir loft. If entering from backstage, they may wear biblical robes, allowing for the Robe Maker and Stone Maker to be the best dressed.

Set Design

You will need a table to display the characters' handmade objects close to each speaker. See prop list for general setup ideas.

If you are using this script in conjunction with a light sacrificial meal, arrange the tables and chairs into a cross and then have the singers present music from a different location than the speakers.

To make thematic napkin holders, cut out wide purple cloth crosses, fold in half to "T" shape, and then cut hole in center top of "T" to insert napkin like a head and then use twine to wrap middle of "robe."

Props

Biblical robe with some purple in it

Crown of thorns (May be fashioned from grapevine, which is available in craft stores)

Leather whip (Can use a braided riding crop or leather belt — may also tie small nails to one end)

Two large nails or metal spikes

Wooden cross

Stone larger than hand

Suggestions

If you have a life-sized cross and fake stone, you may place them on either side of the podium or speaking area and then have the speakers place items as follows so that you do not need a table: robe draped on cross, crown on stone, whip by stone, and nails by cross. Then position your speakers for the cross and stone so that they speak near their objects.

If your speakers need their scripts, encourage them to read from scrolls or place scripts in black music folders. Because their hands will be full, let the previous speaker place the object up front before each speaker stands and comes out of the congregation. For example, the Stone Maker would position the robe for the first monolog.

Sample Order of Worship

(This is an especially powerful program if the congregation is asked to maintain silence the entire time while the singers and readers are the only voices heard.)

Welcome

Prayer

(Optional) Small Sacrificial Meal for Congregation / Group

Program: *Good Friday Grace*

Hymn: "Go to Dark Gethsemane"

Mocking

Robe Maker monolog

Crown Maker monolog

Hymn: "To Mock Your Reign, O Dearest Lord"

Suffering

Whip Maker monolog

Nail Maker monolog

Hymn: "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded"

Sacrifice

Cross Maker monolog

Hymn: "Behold the Savior of Mankind"

Death

Stone Maker monolog

Hymn: "My Savior Jesus"

Benediction

Appropriate contemporary songs may be substituted for the hymn suggestions in accordance with your congregation's preference.

Robe Maker

1
2
3 ROBE MAKER: (*Enters and drapes robe onto display table.*) I like
4 patterns and order in my life. That's what's so special
5 about weaving. Back and forth, back and forth, with the
6 weft through the warp on a shuttle. I used a vertical
7 loom to make my seamless robes and took pride in my
8 craft. It took a long time to make garments; why, even
9 making thread took months. Patterns of life, order in
10 the rhythm, I liked that.

11 Clothing was so valued it was handed down to family
12 members, cared for like a treasure and worn out before
13 discarded. And my seamless robes were no exception. It
14 took a lot of work to bring the ends together at right
15 angles so that the six-foot width of fabric became
16 tubular. After that, it only needed to be trimmed and
17 finished to wear as a tunic.

18 Purple was the hardest color to make, therefore it
19 was the most prized, though our purple was tinged
20 more red back then. While the fabric came from the
21 land, the dye was from the sea. Tiny snails that dyed
22 your hands a reddish purple, like blood that doesn't
23 fade. Is it any wonder I wear gloves? Most weavers'
24 hands wear the mark of their trade, and it doesn't wash
25 away.

26 Jesus wore my robe. I recognized the pattern. What
27 artist doesn't recognize her work? Why did he wear
28 mine? Why did *I* have to be a part of all this — part of
29 this disorderly, violent death?

30 How could they cast lots over his robe while he
31 watched? It was a mockery that my work was treasured
32 more than the life that wore it. They took away his
33 dignity and took away my craftsmanship. What clothing
34 could there be for the king of criminals? Our king
35 wasn't allowed to wear the purple.

Did you know the irony of my seamless robe? A seamless robe was considered to be without flaw, symbolic of God's perfection. How I mocked Jesus then for wearing it. How I understand why now.

Even more irony for you, though. The soldiers didn't take the robe apart because it was believed tearing apart a seamless robe would be offensive to God. You could be cursed for cutting apart its thread and disrupting the perfect circle. What a mockery of Jesus! Wasn't tearing him apart and cutting his life's thread as bad? Wasn't mocking his dying offensive as well?

I didn't want to be part of this; I didn't ask to have a stain upon my hands. I go back and forth about this all the time, my life in full circle back to that seamless robe again. I gave Jesus mockery while he gave me mercy. I wish the pattern of my life was different, my life of different thread. Look at what I gave Jesus, and *look* at what he gave me. (*ROBE MAKER exits.*)

Crown Maker

CROWN MAKER: (*Enters and places crown of thorns on display table.*) It was just a joke. Someone called for a crown and I made one. Took all of five minutes, maybe less. There was no real skill needed either. I was just trying to impress the soldiers. I didn't expect them to use it and keep it on him. Honest.

Have you ever made a crown? It's really easy to do. My kids like the ones made out of flowers, but branches are easier to weave than stems.

I can tell you how to do it. You take a young branch about the size around your finger and a little longer than the length of your arm. Break it off and then wrap the ends around each other a few times as if tying a knot.

As I took that thorn branch, I had to be careful when I pressed the middle into my stomach to wrap the ends. Then it took only a moment to weave the two other thorny pieces around the first to finish. I actually tried it on my head before handing it to the soldier. Because it was all *supposed* to be funny. So funny.

I thought about what's funny when I saw my crown on Jesus' head. It's funny that crowns are supposed to be symbols of power and authority, but this one mocked the King of the Jews.

Thorns are a symbol of sin, you know. Remember how Adam was cursed when he left the garden for his sin? With thorns growing instead of grain. Thorns represent the fall of man, the curse of his sin. That's how we mocked Jesus' fall from power — even if he took the fall for us.

Why didn't he take off my crown? He didn't have to keep it on the whole time. I didn't want him to keep wearing it. It was almost painfully funny to think I wore the crown first, and then he did. What a ... what a joke.

I didn't really think. It was just something I made, something I gave him spur of the moment. You had to be there to understand. I gave him mockery, and he gave me majesty. For my crown of thorns, he gave me his crown of glory.

I remember that I even pricked my fingers on the thorns, but I still kept on weaving that stupid crown. Just another part of the bloody joke.

The crown was a living branch plucked for the branch of Jesse's tree. Thorns, curses, jokes. Yet he wore my crown, he wore my sins. Look at what I gave Jesus, and *look* at what he gave me. (*CROWN MAKER exits.*)

Whip Maker

1
2
3 WHIP MAKER: (*Enters and places whip on display table.*)

4 Leather has many uses. Clothing, tents, harnesses,
5 saddles, armor, shoes. I've made them all. That's what I
6 do.

7 Did you know that the ancient Hebrews were some of
8 the first people credited with using oak bark to tan
9 leather? Before the discovery of tannins, cured leather
10 was hard and unyielding, even when beaten to make it
11 softer. Tanning leather with the tannins found in bark
12 made it soft, flexible, and supple.

13 It was so soft that it made you forget that it was
14 animal skin, that it was once part of a living thing. But
15 even when it was soft, it didn't take long for us to figure
16 out how to make weapons with leather. Bowstrings,
17 slingshots, ropes, whips ...

18 Whips. The leather that was so soft and flexible
19 would sting like a snake. Even worse, it would rip like
20 teeth when bits of metal were attached to it.

21 Did you know that the scourges with metal ends were
22 actually called scorpions? I felt like one sometimes as I
23 caressed the leather that made the whips.

24 It was odd that we worked so hard to make
25 something so soft — even beating it, when we would
26 just turn around and use it to beat others. Think about
27 it. An animal sacrificed its life in order to help take the
28 life of a man.

29 Whips. Scourges. Legal ways to lash out, to hurt and
30 degrade. Jewish law only allowed forty lashes. They
31 actually made it thirty, in case there was a miscount. It
32 was not pleasant, the things I created with leather and
33 the way that they were used.

34 Scourging was considered half death, a way to
35 torture that came as close to killing as possible without

1 actually doing it. Unlike Jewish law, Roman law had no
 2 limit on how many lashes they could inflict upon a
 3 victim. Remember, Jesus was Jewish, but the Romans
 4 beat him. And, of course, I made my whips for the
 5 Romans.

6 Leather might be soft, but people are not. I gave
 7 Jesus suffering while he gave me salvation. I do not
 8 deserve it, but still I take it — because my sins have
 9 beaten me, and I need someone else to whip them. Look
 10 at what I gave Jesus, and *look* what he gave me. (*WHIP*
 11 *MAKER exits.*)
 12
 13

14 Nail Maker

15
 16 **NAIL MAKER:** (*Enters and places two large nails on display*
 17 *table.*) Nails were some of the first things man made with
 18 metal, first with bronze, then, with iron. Nails were so
 19 valuable that in some cultures they burned whole
 20 buildings down and sifted through the ashes for them
 21 rather than risk pulling the nails out and ruining them.

22 Nails were made by hand, hammered out into long,
 23 thick spikes while the metal was burning hot and then
 24 cut to a tapered point while the end was cut flat and
 25 squared up.

26 I like to think of nails as connectors. Things that hold
 27 other things together. Things that build something
 28 useful.

29 Oh, I know what you are thinking. You are thinking
 30 about the spikes. The nails used to connect people to
 31 the cross. The nails used to build despair and useless
 32 death.

33 I wish I could think only of the good uses for nails. I
 34 don't want to think of the truth. I don't want to think of
 35 the burning hot pain or the torture that they forged.

1 Because they were my nails. *My* nails dug into Jesus’
 2 hands. My nails ...

3 Iron nails are strong, holding hundreds of times their
 4 weight. They do not fail their mission. We count on
 5 metal for our lives.

6 When I think of iron, I think of “iron will,” don’t you?
 7 Of all the metals attached to our strength of mind and
 8 body, iron is our choice, and rightly so.

9 You might think of iron as the chemical symbol Fe. I
 10 try to think of my iron nails as Fe too. I have my
 11 reasons, you see. For once, long ago, I heard the letters
 12 f-e pronounced “fay” in a distant language. And in that
 13 tongue, the letters f-e mean “faith.”

14 If I think of Jesus connected to the cross, I remember
 15 his strong faith and iron will. I think of how he did not
 16 fail his mission, either. I have hope of what was built
 17 when his flesh was connected to a tree.

18 I gave Jesus torture, but he gave me truth. I cannot
 19 forget how my carpenter’s nails were misused, how my
 20 metal abused him.

21 He held a hundred times the weight of my sin, so I
 22 only trust the one stronger than my mettle. The one
 23 who is the truth. Look at what I gave Jesus, and *look* at
 24 what he gave me. (*NAIL MAKER exits.*)

25 26 27 Cross Maker

29 **CROSS MAKER:** (*Enters and places a small cross on the display*
 30 *table.*) Don’t look at me like that! You didn’t expect me to
 31 sacrifice my livelihood for a convicted criminal, did
 32 you? If *I* didn’t make his cross, someone else would.
 33 Don’t you understand? Jobs are really hard to come by.

34 You can’t blame me — I had to make a living for my
 35 family. I couldn’t sacrifice them for him. I made the

1 cross, yes, but someone else used it. Crosses aren't the
2 easiest thing to build, but the pay is good. What was I
3 supposed to do?

4 I understand he was a carpenter too. He'd appreciate
5 my work, I'm sure. We Jewish carpenters are a pretty
6 rare breed. There aren't many skilled carpenters in our
7 history. It just wasn't a career that flourished with all
8 the invasions and wars from other more developed
9 countries. How odd that he was a builder like me.

10 Do you know how strong carpenters have to be? It is
11 extremely hard physical labor. We have to cut timber
12 and then square it off with a hand adze or saw. It is
13 rough work — long and tiring, Jesus could tell you.
14 Although I never met him, I'm sure he must have been
15 strong like I was.

16 I knew it was my cross they used. People used to ask
17 me what wood I chose or what dimensions. It wasn't
18 like I cared to remember. Maybe pine or dogwood;
19 something cheap. I think it was around twelve feet by
20 six feet, for the Romans always wanted them big. I
21 never measured because it didn't have to be exact. I
22 think that I might have used four-by-fours, but it's all
23 unimportant, really. Isn't one cross much like another?

24 I didn't even sand it. It takes too much patience and
25 craftsmanship. The soldiers liked the wood to be raw
26 and full of splinters anyway. And besides, smoothing
27 the wood would have sacrificed my time and skill and
28 certainly would have cost me money.

29 Funny how a tree in the Garden of Eden caused all
30 our problems, and a tree of a carpenter solved them.
31 Wood saved Noah from water; wood saved us from fire.
32 What would you have done if you were me?

33 I had to make it. I couldn't disobey the Romans and
34 sacrifice my life for him. I can't help that I gave Jesus
35 sorrow and he gave me sacrifice.

1 I am not the strongest carpenter. I cannot take away
 2 what I made or did, though he can. Look at what I gave
 3 Jesus, and *look* at what he gave me. (*CROSS MAKER*
 4 *exits.*)

7 Stone Maker

8
 9 **STONE MAKER:** (*Enters and puts a medium-sized stone on the*
 10 *display table.*) In the beginning God created the heavens
 11 and the earth and all that is in it. Stones are part of that
 12 earth. When a stone is chiseled loose from the earth, I
 13 feel as if I am touching history, perhaps the very stones
 14 that were there from the beginning of time.

15 Immovable, timeless monuments of a powerful
 16 creation. Set into place until I create with them much
 17 like my Creator first did. I give them a new life, a new
 18 purpose. Perhaps the one that God intended from the
 19 beginning.

20 I shape and decide where and how a stone is used. My
 21 tools chip at the hardness with all my strength and will
 22 and skill behind hammer and wedge — just as the
 23 Creator fashions me.

24 It takes time to fit a stone to a groove that will seal a
 25 tomb. Not only do wealthy families expect you to cut a
 26 family tomb into solid rock, they expect a stone bed
 27 with stone pillows at the head and foot. Then they
 28 expect a two-ton stone to be levered into place on the
 29 outside so that it will not move. I even flatten the
 30 bottom of the stone so that it cannot roll away easily
 31 once it is in place.

32 I made the stone. The one that sealed Jesus' tomb.
 33 The one to seal his fate. He wasn't supposed to be there,
 34 though. Not at that tomb.

35 His family was hard-up. The poor were typically



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